

Jails not liable for crimes after release, state Supreme Court says

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Isaac Zamora appears in court in September 2008, charged with six counts of first-degree murder and four counts of first-degree assault after a shooting rampage. (Matt Wallis/The Associated Press)

The ruling came in the case of Isaac Zamora, who was held in the Skagit County Jail and released a month later. Zamora had a psychotic episode and went on a shooting spree that left six dead.

By [MARTHA BELLISLE](#)

The Associated Press
The Seattle Times

County jails are not liable for crimes committed by inmates after they are out of custody, according to a split ruling by the state Supreme Court.

Thursday's 5-4 ruling came in the case of Isaac Zamora. He was held in the Skagit County Jail in 2008 and released a month later.

In September 2008, Zamora had a psychotic episode and went on a Skagit County [shooting spree that left six dead](#).

Families of the victims sued Skagit County, claiming the jail failed to evaluate and treat Zamora's mental illness.

The trial judge ruled against the families, saying they failed to show the county's negligence caused Zamora's crimes. The appeals court reversed that ruling, but the Supreme Court agreed with the trial judge.

The majority said jails must control violent inmates while incarcerated but can't prevent crimes once they're out. The dissenting justices said the jail knew that Zamora was potentially dangerous.